DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 189 228 UD 020 725

AUTHOR Ginzberg, Eli: And Others
TITLE Tell Me About Your School: Interviews with Elementary and High School Students in Harlem, New York City. Special Report No. 35.
INSTITUTION National Commission for Employment Policy (DOL), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Sep 79
NOTE 79p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Black Youth: Career Awareness: *Career Choice: Educational Environment: Educational Policy: *Education Work Relationship: Elementary Secondary Education: Employment Opportunities: Ghettos: Interviews: Low Income Groups: *Minority Group Children: Role Models: *Student Attitudes: *Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS *New York (New York)

ABSTRACT

Eighty low income students residing in East, Central, and West Harlem were interviewed in an effort to explore how they see their school experiences in terms of their future participation in the world of work. Equal numbers of the students were 10, 11, 14, and 15 years old, and all were of minority background. They were asked questions concerning: (1) skills they have/would like to have: (2) how they and their friends "find school": (3) quantity of homework and help received in doing homework: (4) career goals and how they think school can help to achieve these goals: (5) reading and television viewing: (6) their opinions concerning disruptive students, pregnant students, and school improvement: (7) where and with whom they can discuss their futures: and (8) their summer plans. Results of the interviews are presented in this monograph, with an overview of the findings given for each age and sex group. In addition, themes that emerged from all the interviews are discussed in relation to their educational and employment policy implications. Appended to the report are comments by Glenn Marshall and Gwendolyn Barnes (the individuals who conducted the interviews) regarding the need to improve educational, economic, and occupational opportunities for low income minority youths. (GC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Eli Ginzberg, Chairman; A. Barton Hepburn Professor of Economics and Director, Conservation of Human Resources, Columbia University, New York

Ray Marshall, Secretary of Labor

Patricia Roberts Harris, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare

Max Cleland, Administrator of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Administration

Eleanor Holmes Norton, Chair, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Graciela Olivarez, Director, Community Services Administration

Michael J. Dukakis, Director, Intergovernmental Studies, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Brookline, Massachusetts

Roy R. Escarcega, Senior Vice President, Urban Development Division, The East Los Angeles Community Union, Los Angeles, California

Patsy F. Fryman, Assistant to the President, Communications Workers of America, Fairfax, Virginia

Carol S. Gibson, Director of the Education Division of the National Urban League and Chair of the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education, New York City

George L. Jenkins, Attorney-at-Law, Columbus, Ohio

Sam Lena, Vice Chairman, Pima County Board of Supervisors, Tucson, Arizona

Ruth Love, Superintendent of Schools, Oakland, California

Austin P. Sullivan, Jr., Vice President, General Mills, and Chairman of the Minnesota Governor's Council on Employment and Training, Wayzata, Minnesota

Julius B. Thrower, Admissions Director, S. D. Bishop State Junior College and Vice Chairman, American Association of Minority Veterans Program Administrators, Mobile, Alabama

Isabel V. Sawhill, Director

Tell Me About Your School

Interviews with Elementary and High School Students in Harlem, New York City

by

Eli Ginzberg
with
Glenn Marshall and Gwendolyn Barnes

A Special Report of the
National Commission for Employment Policy
Special Report No. 35
September 1979

1522 K Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20005

4

JUN 9 1980

This volume was prepared for the National Commission for Employment Policy. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions or policy of the Commission or any other agency of the United States Government.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD.	1
1. Conventional Wisdom About Ghetto Schools	5
2. Boys	7
3. Girls.	21
4. Young Men.	33
5. Young Women.	47
6. What the Students Told Us.	59
7. Directions for Policy.	67
APPENDIXES	
A. "With All Deliberate Speed" -- Glenn Marshall. .	75
B. "Summary Views" -- Gwendolyn Barnes.	77

FOREWORD

The year 1979 is likely to be recorded as marking the emergence of youth employment on the nation's agenda. The Administration has taken the lead to focus on the issue with an aim of developing new and more effective policies and programs to deal with the large numbers, particularly of minority youth, who encounter difficulties in finding a regular job. The National Alliance of Business, the Business Roundtable, the Committee for Economic Development and still other groups of employers are reappraising their hiring and training policies with an aim of contributing to the employability and employment of young people who are encountering difficulties in making an effective linkage to the world of work.

The educational community is also becoming more directly engaged at every level--local, state, and national--in an effort to link the schools more effectively to work and thereby help smooth the transition for many students.

The National Commission for Employment Policy from the time of its establishment in 1974 has been concerned with the high unemployment rates of youth, particularly minority youth, and has analyzed the causes and put forward recommendations for new policies and programs (see especially the Second Annual Report of the Commission, December 1976). In 1978 under the promptings of Dr. John Porter, a charter member of the Commission and Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Michigan, the Commission established a Task Force for the purpose of undertaking a comprehensive review of the causes for the persistently high unemployment of minority youth. The object of the exercise was to develop a strategy that promised to alleviate, even if it could not assure the total elimination of this scourge with its attendant high costs to the affected individuals and to society. This substantial effort of the Commission with its wide-reaching recommendations will form the core of its Fifth Annual Report, to be available in December 1979.

As a by-product of the efforts of the Commission to explore in depth the relationships which exist, or which might be established, between the educational system and the world of work, I saw merit in getting one facet of this complex issue under better control by exploring how young people who live in a low income area of a large city (New York) see their school experiences in terms of their current participation as well as in terms of their career objectives. Accordingly, I elicited the assistance of a former student, Mr. Glenn Marshall, who was in the process of completing his requirements for a degree of Master of Social Work at Columbia University and a fellow student in the School of Social Work, Gwendolyn Barnes.

I asked them to interview respectively 40 young men and 40 young women, of minority backgrounds, resident in three low income areas -- East, Central and West Harlem. Each group was to contain equal numbers of 10 to 11 year olds, most of whom would be in the 5th or 6th grade; and 14 to 15 year olds most of whom would be in the 9th or 10th grade. The interviewers were asked to avoid selecting youngsters at either extreme: those who were encountering serious difficulties in school or those whose talents put them on the fast track.

Those who have had experience interviewing young people know that it is no easy matter to engage, and harder to hold, their attention, even when their interest is piqued by offering them, as in the present case, $3 for their participation. Since the point of the inquiry was to see their school experience through their eyes, I developed a relatively small number of leading questions. These sought to elicit the following types of information from the students interviewed: some insight into their skills and career plans; how they and their friends find school; their recommendations about how to deal with peers who disturb the class; what they know about job information and jobs; what the mayor could do to improve the educational system.

The specific questions follow:

1. What Skills Do You Have/Would You Like to Have?

2. How Do You Find School?

3. How Do Your Friends Find School?

4. How Much Homework Do You Get and Who Helps You With It?

5. What Do You Want to be When You Grow Up and Can School Help You?

6. What Have You Been Reading/What About TV?

7. What Else Do You Want to Tell Me About School, Teachers, Principal?

8. What Should Be Done With Students Who Disturb The Class?

9. If You Wanted Information About Jobs Where Would You Get It? What About Your Future/With Whom Have You Discussed It?

10. If You Were Mayor, What Would You Do To Improve the Schools?

11. What Are You Going To Do This Summer?

12. What Do You Suggest About Schooling for Girls Who Are Pregnant?

The structure of this monograph is straightforward. The first chapter sets forth the conventional wisdom about ghetto schools to provide a backdrop to the interview materials. Each of the next four chapters presents an overview and selected interview of the respective subgroup. Chapter six deals with major themes that traverse the reportage. The final chapter, seven, speaks to policy directions.

We are indebted to Mrs. Thomasina Washington of the East River Houses Community Center and Mr. Charles Williams, Martin Luther King, Jr. Towers Community Center for helping us to identify the students and for facilitating our interviewing them.

ELI GINZBERG
Chairman
National Commission for Employment Policy

1. Conventional Wisdom About Ghetto Schools

The American public is duly exercised about the performance of public education in low income areas of our big cities and with considerable justification. They know that many youngsters drop out of school without acquiring the competences they need to be hired into any but the most unskilled job. Many who drop out are one, two, or even three years retarded in reading or arithmetic.

Another cause of widespread concern stems from the knowledge that many youngsters while ostensibly on the school's rolls are in fact spending most of their time on the city's streets often engaged in destructive behavior from vandalism to muggings. Neither truant officers nor others in the educational bureaucracy appear to be deeply concerned, much less successful, in identifying the truants and assuring that they return to the classroom.

Trouble and crime in the streets is only one aspect of the non-engagement of students. There is also a great amount of trouble that occurs within the school -- in the classroom, the corridors, the lavatories, the lunchrooms, the study halls. At the extreme, teachers and others in authority are assaulted. The harassment of fellow students is so pervasive that nobody takes notice except the victim.

There is a no-win debate that has long been underway whether responsibility for these dysfunctional conditions rests with society, the educational leadership, principal and teachers, the community, the family, or the individual student. There are those who contend that if the public would spend as much or more on pupils in disadvantaged neighborhoods as on those attending schools in affluent suburbs many if not all of the foregoing shortcomings could be eliminated. Others refuse to accept this interpretation because they point out that the average expenditures per child in a low income urban area (in the north and west) is considerably above the average for the nation as a whole.

Those who point to the educational bureaucracy as the source of the major difficulties call attention to subtle discrimination, teacher assignment systems that place the youngest and least experienced in the most difficult schools and the seniority systems that result in too few teachers and principals from minority groups. But each of these charges can be rebutted, surely in part, sometimes in whole. There are a few ghetto schools that have been able to perform creditably in the face of these handicaps.

With respect to community control, two contrasting positions can be identified; those who claim that neighborhood schools fail to perform because of an absence of community control, and those who point to instances where conditions actually deteriorated after community boards were granted decision-making powers.

As one might expect, those with roots in the educational enterprise, particularly the classroom teacher and principal, are quick to point to the weaknesses in many of their pupils' families to explain why the school's efforts are often ineffectual. They point out that no school is capable without an assist from the family to establish the discipline, motivation, study habits and performance standards that are integral to effective learning. Many who teach in ghetto areas complain that all or most of these preconditions are absent in the case of their pupils. But others are loath to accept this explanation. They point out that in generations past many children whose families were poor and often disorganized coped with their lessons and obtained at least the basic education they needed to make a reasonable transition when the time came into the world of work.

There are observers who see the heart of the difficulty in the inherent shortcomings of the students themselves. Some believe that minority youth, particularly blacks, have greater difficulty than whites in conceptualization and analysis. Others call attention to the differences between the majority and minority populations with respect to motivational factors. The way they formulate the difference is this: minority youth are more "present-oriented," more interested in immediate gratification which translates into a lack of ability on their part to undergo the discipline and put forth the related effort needed to profit from their schooling.

There is no point in trying to choose among these many explanations for the mediocre educational performance of many minority youth. Some of the explanations are complementary, some contradictory and the last mentioned is beyond the pale except for a few developmental psychologists who are convinced of the hereditary inferiority of the black population.

In the face of so many unproved and even unprovable hypotheses and conclusions there is special merit in the reader's keeping his presumptions and prejudices under control as he follows what these youngsters have to say about their educational experiences. They may not possess an overview of what is right and what is wrong about the schooling to which they are being exposed but it would be presumptuous for others to reach judgments about what should be done to make their schooling more responsive to their needs without paying close attention to what they report.

2. Boys

These youngsters are ten or eleven and span three grades -- 4th, 5th and 6th. The five whose interviews are reproduced come from three different schools. The first three are resident in East Harlem, the last two in Central Harlem. All but the second, who is of Puerto Rican extraction, are black.

Adam

Skills

I play sports, basketball, baseball and softball. I draw pictures of dogs, people and all kinds of things.

I like to learn crafts, you know, ah, sculpture.

School

I like school. I learn a lot about things like music, living with people around you. I feel that school is interesting because I'm learning math, reading, science, and art.

Friends

Most of them are happy to go to school; some don't like school because they don't like the teachers and the school work they do.

Homework

Yes, a whole lot. I get four days a week of homework, some homework on the weekend. Homework is usually four pages of reading, two pages of math and book reports.

My mother and father help me most of the time when I don't understand it.

Future

A pilot. I like to fly jet planes and supersonic planes someday. Also, I like to be a doctor because I like to help people and because I love science. And I like to be a nuclear scientist.

Yes, school can help. School teaches you what you have to know, what you need to know to get a job in what you want to be.

Reading

Wildlife books and mysteries.

What Else About School

My teachers treat the bad kids better than the good kids in class. They are afraid of the bad kids' parents because they fear getting hurt. Some teachers never treat you like a person and don't care about you learning.

Barnes

Skills

Well, I do math well, I read well, draw well and I do arts and crafts well. I like to make things out of wood and I like to make faces out of clay. I also like playing the flute because my teachers will let us keep the flute. I like to sing soft songs and English songs. I play baseball very well. I'm in the pee-wee league.

I got interested in them in school, the center and in the playground. One day my friends asked me if I wanted to play baseball and I said yes.

I would like to play the guitar, make cars, a lot of people like to ride in cars; play basketball because a lot of my friends always ask me to play and I don't know how to play.

School

I like school because I like to work. I like do to math, reading, science, arts and crafts, and music. School is interesting. If I don't go to school, I won't be smart.

Some kids do bad things to the teacher like putting thumbtacks in the chair. My teacher wants to help, but the children resist. They feel that they should come to school and do what they want. The teacher makes a list of the bad children to be given to Mr. R_____ (the assistant principal). One time the bad kids made the teacher cry.

Yes, school is helpful, mainly because I'm learning how to read. In Catholic school, all I did was fight every day. I wasn't learning. All the children did was fight. They didn't want to learn. Now I'm learning a great deal like math, arts and crafts.

Friends

Some hate school. They are lazy and do not want to do the work and they are bad. They don't want to listen to the teacher because they say that the teachers are bad and they are bad to them. When they do this, they prevent me from learning.

Homework

Every day and on the weekends when we are bad.

Two to three pages of work in all my subjects (math, reading and science).

One hour (per night).

I get help from my older brother, he's 13, sometimes from my father and mother.

Future

I would like to be a doctor.

If you want to be a doctor you have to know all the subjects, if you don't, you can't help the people get well.

Reading

Stories, folk tales and fairy tales; comic books -- I collect them; Super Heroes, Hot Stuff and Archie.

What Else About School

I like my teacher, sometimes she is strict, she makes you do your work especially at lunch. There are some kids who like to make trouble because they fight other children and tease them. Sometimes when the teacher gets angry, the teacher punishes the whole class. It's not fair because some kids like to learn, so half the class gets left back. Parents should get involved with their children like my father does. Girls play with boys a lot and don't want to do the work. Kids who want to learn work together. My friend and I do homework together and test each other.

Yes, my teacher wants us to learn. She cares about us. My teacher is black.

Clarence

Skills

I'm very good at writing compositions, telling stories, playing games like monopoly, playing baseball, basketball and softball, and doing science.

I became interested in them in school, watching TV and playing with my friends. I tried them out and I like them.

I really don't know about skills I would like to have, I can't say right now.

School

I don't like it that much. Some of the teachers treat me nice, some of them treat me mean. You see, like when we sit at our tables in class, the table next to us starts talking then we get blamed and the whole table gets punished, like we had to write 100 times I must not talk in class, therefore, we miss lunch. Some kids are not friendly, they start fights, some are bullies.

A lot of talking, but not that much fighting and arguments. When we go to drama we get excited, but not that much talking goes on.

Yes, our teacher puts it into our heads fast. I learned more than last year. Our teacher is mean, she wants us to learn and she gives us quizzes on vocabulary, etc. Other teachers let you go, they don't give any test.

Friends

They are not that happy about it because they complain about too much homework and teachers; sometimes they get aggravated with her.

Homework

Yes, lots of it.

Every day.

I get homework in every subject, three pages of reading; two pages of math; two pages of social studies; and one page of science.

Sometimes when the homework is real hard, I spend a half hour, other times I spend 20 minutes.

My mother helps when the homework is hard and my big brothers.

Future

A fireman.

I can tell you all the facts about saving people's lives and how to be brave about it.

Reading

Books, folk tales, comic books and riddle books.

What Else About School

Ain't nothing much to tell about, it's just that school is about learning.

Yes, because they question you a lot about new things so you can learn them.

David

Skills

I'm good at math, football, baseball, soccer, swimming, climbing trees and fences.

Well, I became interested in math when my teacher kept telling me to keep on trying, for at first I was not learning anything. I became interested in sports by watching Wide World of Sports and when I went to day camp, I asked my counselor to teach me.

I would like to learn how to be a manager of a housing project.

School

School's alright because in my school the lunches are good. My teacher takes us outside and gives us extra gym.

(What goes on in the classroom) Fights, when someone does something wrong, my teacher gets the stick and hits them with it. My teacher also writes too many things on the board about social studies.

Friends

I don't know because they don't talk about school.

Homework

Every day, except when we go on trips.

One page in math, science, social studies, spelling and reading.

One hour.

My mother.

Future

A lawyer.

Yes. School teaches you things.

Reading

Books like Dennis the Menace, Star Wars, Benji and Snoopy.

What Else About School

My principal is mean, rough and tough because if you do anything wrong, he'll get after you and you go up to his office.

Unruly Students

They should put them out or punish them like keeping them up in the principal's office all day.

Jobs

My center director.

If You Were Mayor

Get better teachers, like expert teachers.

Get better principals.

Make sure the kids go to school.

Summer

I'm going to day camp, down south and camping.

Edward

Skills

I'm good at math, science, language art, drawing, coloring and history, also sports.

First I was falling back on my school work, my mother told me that I should study more so I just became good at them. Sports were something that all my friends played, so I watch them and learned. My mother brought me some equipment so I became good at them.

Learn more about science.

School

It's alright because I'm getting a fairly good education. My mother wants me to go to college.

Sometimes people don't do their work and their parents get letters from the teachers. Some teachers I don't get along with.

Friends

They don't like it, sometimes they play hooky.

Homework

No.

(How much time do you watch TV?) Never, I just read books.

Future

An auto mechanic; right now I'm working in a parts shop with my father.

Right now, I'm in a special class for auto mechanics.

Reading

Books, fiction and non-fiction; biographies and novels. From the public library.

What Else About School

Nothing goes on in school, it's really boring.

Yes, school's OK because it stops me from getting into trouble.

Unruly Students

They should be suspended and a card should be sent home.

Jobs

My father, he got my mother a good job.

If You Were Mayor

Hire more teachers. Get rid of all the bad kids. Get rid of all the bad teachers.

Summer

Play sports mostly and go to Hunter College for a summer school program.

Additional Interview Material

Several of the youngsters emphasize that the teachers "scream" at them, something that they greatly dislike-the more so if they have not been the cause of the trouble. Other terms that come through not only occasionally, but repeatedly, are "mean" and "strict." Several of the interviewees use the first to characterize both teacher and principal. With respect to strictness, they are ambivalent. Some complain about their teacher being too strict, but others note that their teacher is not strict enough.

But one must be careful to balance these negatives with positives. Consider #28: "The principal is good,; he helps us too, like the teachers." Of another, #31: " ... if you want her (the teacher) to help you, she will help you only if you want to help yourself. If you don't want to help yourself, she won't help you." The same youngster said that his teacher "favors the girls in class, especially when answering questions." This is the only reference to favoritism that appeared in the interviews of the boys.

There were repeated references as in #32 to disruption in the classrom, "I don't like what goes on. Usually there is a lot of fighting, talking and playing cards." And many who objected to the disturbance recommend that the unruly be "put out of school." An occasional student reveals a less extreme response as in the case of #33: "Their mothers should come to school to talk with the teachers and should be given chances before they get suspended." Several such as #34 said that they could be learning more except for the disruption.

Among the strange insights offered was the following #30: "When you go the bathroom, the whole class goes with you. One of my teachers takes the girls, and the other takes the boys."

We asked questions about substitute teachers and discovered that the students were exposed to them relatively infrequently, mostly when their regular teacher was ill, which did not happen more than once a month.

After the interviewing had begun, we added several questions including how many hours they looked at television, whether they had a library card, whom they would consult about job information, and whether they knew any high school graduates who had obtained a good job.

The replies fell in the following bounds: TV viewing time averaged about four hours daily; most students had a library card, but many got their reading material from the school library or from local stores; teacher, center directors, relatives were the persons whom they would consult about jobs; and few reported that they knew a high school graduate who had obtained a regular job.

3. Girls

The five girls whose interviews follow attend five different elementary schools. With the exception of Clara, who lives in West Harlem, the other four come from the East Harlem community. All are black. Although they are only two years apart in age (10 or 11) their grade in school ranges from 4th for Amy to 7th for Clara.

Amy

Skills

Math, reading that's about it.

I like to draw. I can play the drums and sing. I can fix toys and play baseball, football, kickball, soccer and tennis.

I learned to play the drums in church and my brothers play baseball and football. I play with them. I got interested in soccer and tennis in summer school.

Drawing, I would like to be an artist.

School

I like school because I like to learn but sometimes the teachers make us do things we don't want to do. Well, before we go on a trip the teacher will make everyone go to the bathroom even if we tell her we don't have to go.

The boys fight most of the time. They like to start trouble (pick fights) with the girls. The boys are nasty to the teacher. Sometimes she puts them in a corner, calls the assistant principal or ignores them.

Yes, I'm learning how to write stories, how to sound out words, how to do different kinds of math and how to play an instrument.

Friends

I don't know, we don't talk about school.

Homework

Yes, every day except half days.

Two hours a day.

My sister and grandmother.

Future

I want to be an artist.

Yes, because on Friday we have art classes and we learn how to make things.

Reading

I read Fiesta, Air Pudding and Wind Sauce, How Mothers Are. I like to read.

What Else About School

The principal is nice. The teacher is mean. If the principal sees us doing wrong, she doesn't say anything but if the teacher sees us she will punish us. Sometimes she pulls our hair or ear.

Beatrice

Skills

Reading and dancing.

I like to design things, I play the piano; also baseball, kickball and basketball.

My brother plays sports and designs things. I become interested in music when I took it in school.

I would like to be a good actress.

School

Some of the children fight and the teacher hits them with a paddle. Sometimes she takes away their gym period.

Yes, I'm learning math and reading. My reading score is between 6.8 and 6.9.

Friends

Yes, my friends like learning, they also like gym. Sometimes they play around. We help each other with our lessons.

Homework

Yes, every day.

20 minutes to an hour a day.

My brother mostly but sometimes my mother and father.

Future

I would like to be a nurse and an actress. Yes, school would teach me about the human body, how to tell time. We give plays in school and have talent shows.

Reading

I like to read. I read Nancy Drew, Dracula and The Hardy Boys.

What Else About School

My principal cares about us because he talks to the kids and disciplines them when they are bad.

Clara

Skills

Spelling.

I play the flute and I run track.

My music teacher taught me to play the flute when I was in the 5th grade.

I want to learn typing.

School

I like school. My teacher gives us lessons to do in class and things to think about i.e., if you were on the moon how would you act on a different planet? Nobody fights in my class.

Friends

They like school. They like learning new things.

Homework

Yes, every day. Twenty to thirty minutes. My father helps me with math sometimes.

Future

I want to be an airplane stewardess or a typist. School can help me become a typist. I don't know about an airline stewardess.

Reading

I read sometimes but nothing lately.

I watch TV a lot. My favorite programs are mysteries and comedies.

Unruly Students

If kids really make a lot of trouble they should go to a psychiatrist and also discuss the problem with their parents. Teachers shouldn't be allowed to hit the child unless they have the parents' permission. If the child is very bad, the parents should give their permission.

If You Were Mayor

There aren't enough books, I would get more and I would improve the lunches.

Pregnant Girls

They should let the girls go to school and graduate.

Debby

Skills

I like to design things like little doll clothes. We make them in school. I'm good at that.

I got interested when my sister made a jumper. She's 17 years old.

I would like to be a photographer and an actress.

School

School is what's happening, but when I get there I can't wait to get back home. I like the mornings best. In the afternoon nothing happens but in the morning I work on a special project. On Tuesday afternoons we have music which I don't like. We have to play the flute and the teacher gets mad if you mess up.

Every day people have fights. I fight too if I have to but not for no reason. I had an argument today. A boy threw a piece of crayon at me when I threw it back at him the teacher yelled at me. She always yells at me when I throw things back at people.

We learn math, science and about different kinds of animals from all parts of the world.

Friends

Some of them can't stand school. My friend Brenda plays hooky. I never do. She hangs around the school and sometimes the teacher gets the principal. Sometimes the teacher brings her in the class and screams at her.

Homework

Every day except Friday unless we don't have school on Monday.

About 10 minutes.

No, I don't do my homework at home. I do it at the center and my counselor helps me. If I don't do it at the center, my mother or my sister helps me.

Future

I like to do a lot of things but I don't really know what I want to do when I grow up. I want to have a lot of jobs.

Yes, school can help because without an education I won't be able to get a job.

Reading

I like to read. That's what I do most. I read Trains That Work, Freaky Friday and Sara and Katie.

When I read a book I get a lottery ticket. If I win the lottery I get another ticket. In school we have a chart to show how many books we read.

What Else About School

If the teacher finds something missing from her desk she gets the principal, then she says the next time it happens she's going to call the police, but she never does. She only threatens. Once she said someone stole her map. She went and got the principal but the map was in her desk drawer.

Ellen

Skills

I sing.

I like to sing and design. I design modern things like clothes.

I became interested in designing clothes by dressing up my doll. I have one big doll.

I would like to be a nurse because I'm good in science but I know that's going to take a lot of years. I would also like to be a good teacher.

School

I like school very much.

There're a lot of fights. The kids fight over simple things or they argue about what the teacher does. When they fight, the teacher doesn't do anything. She can't control the class and has to get a man teacher to break up the fights.

Not (learning) that much because the teacher can't control the class. The principal told her he was going to get rid of her if she doesn't learn to control the kids.

We have substitutes a lot, but they leave because they don't know what's going on. We had five different substitutes this semester. I like substitutes the best because they make the class be quiet. The homeroom teacher lets the kids do what they want and it shouldn't be like that.

Friends

Most of my friends don't like it. They throw spitballs in class.

Homework

Yes. I get homework every day.

Five times a week we get a lot of homework.

1 or 2 hours a day.

Because it's so easy, I don't need help.

Future

I want to be a nurse.

Yes, school can help by teaching me about parts of the body such as the brain, muscles, 5 senses but the school can't teach me what to do in an emergency.

Reading

I read Jaws, Galaxy, Looking for Mr. Goodbar. It took me a few weeks to read it but I finished it. I also read Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, Tom Thumb and Huckleberry Finn and I read a book about money. I mostly read on the weekends.

What Else About School

School is a good place to get an education, to learn about life. It's a nice place to stay for 6 hours a day. My teacher is a big, no good teacher. She doesn't teach us anything. The only time we get to learn anything is when we have a substitute. Next to substitute teachers, the gym and drama teacher teaches us the most.

Additional Interview Material

A ten year old #4 says that she likes school because "sometimes my reading teacher lets me do extra reading and so does my math teacher." This same interviewee says that "I'd like to be a teacher because I like school and like teaching children."

An eleven year old #6 reports that her art teacher got her "interested in drawing." Several of the respondents reported that they had acquired interests and skills from siblings such as #8: "My sister taught me to make rugs last Christmas." This girl indicated that she wanted to be a nurse when she grew up, the most frequent choice among her peers, selected by about half of all the girls.

An unusual response to how her friends liked school was the reply of #9 who pointed out that they didn't care for school "because they say it is hard to get up in the morning and they just don't like it."

Interviewee #11 reported that she likes "music but I don't like the teacher because he screams at us if we make a mistake" a trait that was shared by the one principal who is mean (the other is nice). "The mean one screams at us for dumb reasons and he is strict."

One of the more traumatic experiences of school is to be accused unfairly and punished for something one didn't do: #13 - "I don't like school because my teachers blame things on me and then I can't go on trips. Sometimes they are right but sometimes they are wrong."

An eleven year old #17 in West Harlem replying to what goes on in the classroom said: "Nothing much. The girls do their work. The boys are jumpy. They throw things at the girls when the girls do their work. When the teacher makes the girls monitors, the boys get jealous." The same youngster pointed up what was key to her school experience: "The teachers in my school are concerned about me. They like me and I like them."

The extent to which even interested and concerned teachers encounter difficulties is suggested by the comment of #19: "My teacher can't teach because the kids are talking all the time." On the other hand #20 reports a different outcome: "People fight, the teacher screams at the kids but most of the kids do their work."

4. Young Men

All five of the young men whose interviews are reproduced below live in East Harlem. One, John, attended a specialized high school, the others are enrolled in one of two intermediate schools. All are of the same age, 14, and are in the eighth grade, except John who has advanced to the ninth. Gregory is Hispanic; the others are black.

Frank

Skills

I'm good at reading, singing, hobbies, wood craft and art.

I got interested in these things by coming to the center. I saw all the things the other kids were doing, so I became interested in them.

I would like to learn how to fix cars, airplanes and in general, how machines and engines work.

School

Sometimes I like school and sometimes I don't. First of all, Jr. High School 1- , was old. They showed us new pictures of the new school (P.S. 5-) and we were told that it was a better school but in fact it was not. My school is a jail. If two classes cause trouble (fighting, name calling, food fights, etc.), everybody gets punished. If one person causes trouble like starting fights, ringing the fire alarms, the whole class gets punished. School treats us like children instead of adults.

When you teach a class everybody is suppose to pay attention and when this doesn't happen, the teacher gets mad because she can't handle the class anymore. Everyone does whatever they want to do, this goes on all day. Kids talk to other kids, some fight, argue; people get mad at each other. The teachers are mad at us.

Friends

They feel the same way I do. Sometimes school is fun, sometimes boring.

Homework

We get very little homework. Once or twice a week. We mostly do our homework in school.

I spend about one hour on it, I do my homework first. They usually give us 2 hours worth and usually it's a lot.

From my mother and father.

Future

I would like to be an auto mechanic or a pilot.

No. My school doesn't have the equipment nor the teachers to teach us about cars and airplanes.

Reading

Books, stories of famous movie stars, baseball players...

What Else About School

My school is very quick to change.

The teachers and principal, when visiting other schools, would try to make our school the same way.

If somebody acts up in class, the teachers scream at him, then there is an argument, then the kid gets sent to the principal for punishment, he's suspended from school, returns and does the same thing once again.

Jobs

Yes, my counselor. Every Wednesday I see her.

She's been saying that I should want to go to school and I should improve my grades. Also, she's been discussing the kinds of high school I should go to but she doesn't discuss college.

Yes, because I like to have an education, a good life, a job so I could support a wife so I would not have to go on welfare.

Yes. I would like to go to college.

Gregory

Skills

I play all kinds of sports and I read well.

Talking to my father I got interested in these things. Acting, fixing cars.

School

I like school a lot, I really like it a lot. There is a couple of subjects that I'm interested in like math and science.

Most of what's happening in the classroom are arguments between the students and teachers.

I am not learning much in school. Not as much as I would like to.

Too many arguments between the students and teachers.

Friends

To some of them school is terrible, to the rest it's o.k. sometimes.

Homework

Every other day.

Two pages.

One hour.

No. Once in a while I get help outside my home like at the center.

Future

I would like to be a professional baseball player and a basketball player.

No. School cannot teach these kinds of things.

Reading

Books, stories, mysteries and sports magazines.

What Else About School

School is not so good, it could be better.

No, the teachers don't spend so much time teaching.

Jobs

No. I haven't talked to anybody.

Yes because things that I want to learn are in high school.

Hannibal

Skills

I play sports (baseball, basketball, etc.) and I draw.

By growing up in the neighborhood I just drew, especially science fiction.

I would like to play the guitar in a band, learn about computers and electronics.

School

Boring.

Noise, fighting, joking, people throwing paper around, spitball fights, horseplaying, stealing of notebook papers, cursing, writing on blackboards, and yelling back at the teachers. Teachers hardly teach anything, no explanations are given for lessons or assignments. Teachers scream a lot at people who don't do anything, especially at me. Teachers curse at each other and tell the students not to curse. Teachers put students down by using the "Penwheel Attack," the teachers have a secret meeting about who they think is mean or who they don't like, to pick on.

I would love to learn more if I could.

I try to learn but the teachers don't want to teach us. Teachers take too many breaks. They eat too much candy, yogurts and cakes.

Friends

Everybody feels school is boring. They come because they have to get an education. They prefer not to come, cut class, etc. Some come just for different subjects like math, gym, science and lunch.

Homework

Every day, a lot of times.

Two pages per subject. It's usually one and half hours worth of work.

About 30 minutes to 1½ hours.

Yes, only when I need help. From my older sister who's in college.

Future

I would like to be a navigator.

It could help if you get the right education. P.S. 5- is suited for dropping out because it's a drag.

By providing me with the right teachers, books, information, equipment, etc.

Reading

Books, science fiction, poems, non-fiction and other fiction stories.

What Else About School

The lunches are no good, 20% is right and 80% is not right; the food is burnt, not well done sometimes, and stale. The library-- no interesting books there, the books there are for babies, books are out of order, the people who run the library don't do a good job. Teachers punish you unnecessarily. The teachers can't take jokes. They tell lies about you. Teachers put down the smart kids. A lot of smart kids are in the lower classes or slower classes. Teachers should help us more. Gym classes are too routine. Much stealing goes on. Equipment is in ruin. We have to pay for our own food for a graduation picnic. Teachers are stealing our money from our cake, cookie and donut sales.

No. They don't care about us, they just want the money. Too many fire drills.

Jobs

Yes, my counselor.

He talks about my chances of making a good high school based on my grades.

Yes, I don't want to drop out even though I know that it will be tough staying in.

Yes, going to high school, getting a job, and going to college.

John

Skills

I write poems, sing, dance, tell jokes, play sports and I write plays.

Like when I was growing up things just came to me. I just practice at them and I became good at them.

Acting, play basketball better and write well.

School

I like school. School is preparing me for the future. To me school is about learning, about life, how life is.

It all depends on the class. When you get into classes like math and science, the classes are cool. When you get into classes like drama and art and shop, there is a lot of disruption. I sometimes get the devil in me because I don't want to be left out.

Not much, maybe the normal rate of 50%, but I'm not learning.

Because of the time, I don't think that there should be 45 minutes to each class, there should be an hour to each class. If more time were given I and the rest of my classmates would learn more and be better prepared for college.

Friends

Many of them like school. Most of them are trying their best to get out of the 12th grade so they can go on to college or whatever.

Homework

Depends on the classes, some classes like math and science. I get homework regular, some classes like shop -- no homework.

Depends on the classes, sometimes four pages, sometimes eight pages of work.

Until it takes me to do it. If the homework is for 10 or 15 minutes, it takes me an extra 5 minutes. If its an hour and 15 minutes, it takes me an extra 10 minutes.

My parents and my older brothers and sisters.

Future

I would like to be a sports commentator and a sports journalist.

My school has a journalism class and a broadcasting class, and I know I will be taking them next year. Also, my school has a press club.

Reading

Books about the Nation of Islam because I'm interested in it.

What Else About School

The teachers I find are trying to do the best they can. All the school needs is a little more help in educating us. At the rate the schools are going now, a lot of young people are dropping out, mostly minorities, Puerto Ricans and Blacks.

Yes. It's not like they push you, they urge you like when somebody gets out of hand in class, the teachers sit down with him to talk to him for awhile.

Jobs

Yes, the Counseling and Career Program, but I left because I wasn't getting anything out of it because they were not teaching me anything new. We didn't sit down to talk about the community and its problems.

Yes, because you need your high school diploma.

I would like to go to college. I would like to have a trade in journalism. All I really want to do is to write a book about East Harlem and go somewhere.

Kenneth

Skills

I play baseball well; art and woodwork (carving).

When I was down south for two years, I became interested. My brother taught me how to do art.

I would like to learn more about art.

School

It's alright in a way.

Just a lot of work, that's all. Sometimes a little kidding around.

Learning in-between.

Most of the teachers don't give you that much attention.

Friends

They feel it's fair to them as long as they get something out of it, the right things they need to learn, to do well in their classes and to make it.

Homework

Yes, lots of it.

Every day except Friday. Sometimes my teachers misses one day out of the week.

Two to three pages for four classes: math, corrective math, reading and social studies.

Future

I would like to be an architect.

Yes, most likely in the art class.

School can tell you the things you need to know--information on schools to go to.

Reading

Books, mostly everything in history, health science, and art.

What Else About School

Nothing as long as they give us the education that we need to get into college and be somebody. The teachers have helped us but not the principal. All he does is sit back in his office to relax and give suspension notices. He'll do anything to get a kid suspended. He just gives out orders. He likes to do this and he's Black at that. He gets along better with the Puerto Ricans than he does Blacks.

Just the teachers, they will try to give you the things you need to learn.

Jobs

Yes, the supervisors on my floor in school and the assistant principal.

They say don't just pick any high school, pick a school that you like and you're interested in.

Yes, I want to be somebody, to have a good job and make some money.

Yes, getting into college.

Additional Interview Material

A considerable number, such as #21, reported that they knew no one who had finished school and who had succeeded in landing a good job. The same respondent said he would like to be a "black architect" when he grew up. This was a rare reference to the role of race in their lives. Respondent #24 said he "wanted to write about black people and about the ghetto and love."

One of the students, #22, who succeeded in gaining entrance to a selective high school, Brooklyn Tech, was sensitive to the close linkages between schooling and later work: "I feel that I have to go to school to get a good job. You have to have a profession in order to qualify for a good job." He was also the only respondent who said, "I'm going to college definitely."

The extent to which students who want to study resent their peers who make trouble in the classroom is suggested by the comment of #23 who said that the kids causing disturbances "should be put out of the class, or put away somewhere."

In answer to an inquiry as to whether summer school would be a good idea as early as the 4th grade, #24 said no "because they don't have that much trouble in learning. It's just in junior high school you start failing." The same student in responding to what he would do if he were Mayor to improve the educational system said: "Provide a college fund or bonds for students who attend school and do well."

While fathers are frequently absent from the home, the influence of other relations can be seen as in the following comment by the grandfather of #25: "Money is important and I'll get a good job with money if I get a good education, do good in school and earn a scholarship."

There was relatively little reference to sex and almost none to drugs. However, #26 talked about, "some people checking out the girls." He went on to add: "If you want to learn, you learn. The teachers say, 'If you don't want to listen, don't listen; if you do, then listen.' Some of them think school is a drag; they don't like it. I know this guy who didn't go to school for two months." Small wonder that many students are negative: "The teachers think school is a jail; they don't let us out sometimes. They think we are criminals."

In #27, we see the influence of siblings on educational and career choices: "She [sister] says I should finish school and go to high school and college because that's the only way I'll be able to make it. She says I should think about being

an engineer. You know my sister is in college and she says it's a good deal."

The tension between students and teachers is reflected in the following comment #9: "Sometimes when the teachers get mad at the students and when they get sick they don't come in. Often they don't come in to school and if they're in school they just simply leave." Or the situation described by #11: "Some of the teachers might take advantage of the students like if they hit you and you hit them back, they'll call the principal and have you suspended."

School may leave a great deal to be desired., #12: "I hate when people take your stuff -- clothes, shoes, money -- out of your locker." "But I feel that school is something I got to do because without it you can't do nothing like getting a good job. You have to get out there and get yours before they give you what you want."

Much the same sentiment is reflected by #14: "A lot of my friends ask me to play hooky, but I tell them that I have to get the education."

The difference in attitude between students and those in authority is suggested by another comment of #14: "The school has a lot of rules like don't bring no weapons to school."

5. Young Women

All of these young women, except Irene who is fourteen, are fifteen. They are in the ninth or tenth grade except for Irene who is still in the eighth grade. Each of the five attends a different school. Felicia, Helen and Irene live in West Harlem, Grace and Janet in East Harlem. All are black.

Felicia

Skills

Dancing. I just picked it.

I would like to sing.

School

I like school, it's ok. I would go to summer school.

Some people curse the teacher, some do work. Some of the girls fight.

I would like to learn math and social studies.

Friends

I think they like it.

Homework

Yes, it reinforces what you learn in class.

Every day.

Ten minutes a day.

Future

An actress.

What Else About School

If the teachers and principals see kids smoking pot on the school terrace they don't do anything about it. Sometimes they take pictures of them.

If You Were Mayor

I would get better teachers.

Pregnant Girls

Take her out of regular school and let her go to a school for pregnant girls because she may have a fight, get hurt, and lose the baby.

Grace

Skills

I love math and I'm good at it. I'm also good with horses.

I play basketball.

When I make a b sket I feel I have accomplished something. When you help the team it's a good feeling. Math is fun I like algebra and working with numbers. I've always liked horses. I love anything that has to with horses.

I would like to play a guitar. I want to act, I love to do plays because you show people your talent.

School

I think it's terrific. They're trying to teach us what we should know to make it in life.

My school is like a wild school. There are a lot of fights. When things calm down they get to the lessons. Everybody is quiet in their favorite classes like math, reading, social studies and gym.

I'm nice to my teachers because if they have an interest in me they will want to help me more.

Friends

Most of my friends are indifferent to school but they go because they realize that they need a diploma to get a job. They go to school, the teacher marks them present and then they leave (play hooky). They don't go to learn.

Homework

No, I don't get homework very often except math. We get a work sheet and that's once in a blue moon.

About twice a month.

About 20 minutes - 1/2 hour.

My mother helps me.

Future

I really haven't thought about it. I'll probably teach kindergarten. I like to be with little people.

Reading

I read biographies, mysteries and books like Roots.

I learned how one race of people will use and take advantage of another. I learned about some of the things black people have gone through. I learned that if you concentrate you can solve a problem by using your brain.

What Else About School

Some of the teachers try to teach and some don't care. A lot of teachers will tell you they get paid whether we learn or not. Some people don't care about themselves and some don't care about other people. They will do things regardless of whether it's right or wrong in order to be accepted.

Jobs

Yes. They ask me how I feel about school. I tell them I love school. They ask me if I want to go to college, I tell them yes.

I plan to stay in until I finish because I'm interested in school. I like math, reading, the activities. It gives me a chance to learn. If I get my diploma then I will feel that I have made it in this neighborhood.

Helen

Skills

I'm taking African dancing. I'm good at it. I also swim.

I can draw, I make clothes, I play kickball and basketball.

We had to choose a course in school and I chose dancing. My mother sews and I sew at home. I learned to play basketball in gym.

School

I don't like it. I can't stand school because of the teachers, some of them are nice and some are not. If you kid around they kick you out of class/school.

People play around and make noise all the time. They also fight in class.

No, I'm not learning much because I'm sick of school.

There are too many of my friends in the same class and we talk all the time.

Friends

They don't like it.

Homework

Yes, I get homework but I don't do it because I like to be outside.

Every day except Friday.

About 1 hour a day when I do it. The only time I do it is when I can't go outside or there's nothing else to do.

No, because I know how to do it.

Future

A beautician.

Reading

I haven't read anything lately because I'm outside.

Jobs

Staying in school and getting my diploma because by the time I get old enough to get a job you'll have to have one.

Irene

Skills

Dancing, shop metal and gymnastics.

I can fix toys and I sing in church.

In 7th grade, we were tested in shop metal, dancing and gymnastics. I did well in all of them.

School

People do silly things like put signs on people's back. The boys throw things at the girls to impress them but it causes fights.

I would try to make students aware of the importance of education and encourage them not to smoke.

Yes, when I first began the semester, my reading level was 5.2 now its 8.9. My mother helped me. She talked to me and I did better.

Friends

They like school.

Homework

Yes.

Every day, 5 times a week.

Two-three hours a day.

My mother; she also checks my homework.

Future

A nurse or teacher.

Reading

I read sometimes, nothing lately.

Unruly Students

The schools should treat them mean. They should have mock trials and treat them like they treat the teachers.

Jobs

My mother's friends, my aunt.

My mother says stay in school, keep your mouth shut, talk to your friends after school. Get an education.

I'm not going to drop out.

Go to college.

Pregnant Girls

Treat them normally until about 7 months then put them out but let them come back after the baby is born and finish their education.

Janet

Skills

Gymnastics and basketball.

Yes, I used to take art and I'm good at drawing.

I'm double jointed that's why I became interested in gymnastics.

School

It's alright, I like it. There's nothing to it, it's easy.

I am not learning as much as I would like to.

Because I don't want to get too far ahead of my class. I want to stay with the group.

Friends

Some like it and the rest cut classes. They play basketball or get high in the park.

Homework

Yes.

Not often about twice a week.

About an hour a week.

My mother and brother.

Future

I've never really thought about it. I like nursing and photography.

School can help a little because they can teach the basics about photography and nursing before you go to college.

Reading

I like to read a little. I've read Damien, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, The Drowning Pool and Jaws.

What Else About School

School is crazy. A lot of people run around hanging out in the hallways and parks.

Jobs

My counselor.

She asked me about my future plans and tells me what I should or shouldn't be doing.

I'm going to graduate. I need an education.

I want to go in the Marines. If I can't get in I'll get a job or go to college.

Additional Interview Material

The young women in addition to being somewhat older than the young men--about 1 year--appeared to be more positively oriented toward school.

In the view of #18 "my teachers are nice. For one thing they try to get everyone to come to school." And the respondent continued "I would encourage teachers who are afraid of students to be stricter and not just sit back and say I'll get paid whether they learn or not."

Interviewee #9 showed considerable understanding about the students who act up in class: "I would put them in special schools to help them with their problems. Some of them are neglected and just want attention." But others are unsympathetic and recommend suspension. Girls who get pregnant should be sent to "a special school because people tease them and call them stupid and talk about them." Interviewee #14 suggested that they stay out of school "because they might get into a fight and the baby get hurt." But most recommended that they continue in school till close to their delivery.

One student #20 wanted to take a strong line with those who disturbed the class: "Troublemakers should be sent to a separate school far away from their homes. They should spend the night there and if possible be taught manners."

In some cases parents and relatives exert considerable pressure on the youngster to stay in school and do well. Consider #2 who reported this is what her parents told her. "Stay in school, there's nothing out there on the street; you can't be anything on the street."

Several of the students agreed with #7 that "school sometimes is hectic because we have so many finals and tests." But another student #8 reports that her friends like school "because their teacher lets them play." Another, #13, reports that those of her friends who don't like school "play hooky because it is boring."

A black student #11 who attends a bilingual school is uptight because she reports that when "they have shows in the auditorium everything is in Spanish. Even during black history week the program is mostly in Spanish. Some of my teachers act as if they don't like black people and I don't like them."

6. What the Students Told Us

If one juxtaposes the conventional wisdom about ghetto schools with the interview materials which we have just presented it becomes clear at once that many assumptions and beliefs about contemporary urban education require reassessment and correction. Without ascribing any significance to the ordering of the confrontations between the beliefs that many adults hold and the views expressed by these young people, the following issues warrant reassessment.

The assumption that urban education is a wasteland, a place where the taxpayers' money is squandered by paying the salaries of teachers who don't teach and students who come to class to play and not to learn is far wide of the mark. It is regrettably true that some teachers don't do much teaching either because of excessive disruption in the classroom or because of their lack of interest or capacity to engage and interest those who are assigned to them. But if these 80 interviews about the educational situation in the largest black community in the United States is reasonably representative of large cities the concept of an educational wasteland is an exaggeration.

What the interviews emphasize is that most teachers are interested in having their pupils learn and that most pupils (those who attend more or less regularly) are interested in acquiring both knowledge and a diploma. This does not mean that some teachers have not been defeated in their efforts to make a real impact on their students or that many students have not been turned off by their experiences in school. Both conditions prevail and they are sufficiently pervasive to call for study and corrective action. But it would be an error to read the interviews as substantiating the pessimistic view that the negatives in the situation have come to dominate. That is not what our interviewees reported.

Consider the matter of whether the students read books. The pessimists hold that many or most ghetto students are so far behind the reading norms of students who attend schools outside of low income areas, that for all practical purposes they must be considered to be only quasi-literate. Such a judgment is probably extreme. It is improbable that both our younger and older interviewees would have reported that they borrow books regularly from the school library, from the neighborhood public library, or from stores in their locality unless reading for pleasure was a regular activity. Only a small number said that they did not have a borrowing card from the public library and only one student stated outright that she doesn't read much and seldom finishes a book because she prefers to be outside.

Further substantiation that most of them are readers can be gained from their replies as to what they had recently read and what they gained from their reading.

The pessimists might counter with the claim that when one considers the amount of time that these young people devote to reading and contrasts it with the hours they devote to watching television one has clear evidence that reading plays a minor role in their developmental experiences. Admittedly it was the exceptional respondent who told us that he or she preferred to read rather than to watch TV; or that their parents rationed their watching TV during the school week. But it is not altogether clear how the greater investment in time in watching TV should be judged. True, the shows that these young people mentioned as being among their favorites did not have a great deal of intellectual content and it is likely that watching TV for 3 to 4 hours every evening was a poor investment of their time. But for low-income families TV is the principal recreational outlet--as it is also for many middle-class families. If a student pays close attention during the 5 hours he or she is in school and does 1 to 2 hours homework a night, one might conclude that several hours of TV watching should not be considered dysfunctional. The critical question is what goes on while the student is in school or preparing for school. TV is a subsidiary activity.

As noted in Chapter One, part of the conventional wisdom relates to the presumed weaknesses of low-income families which many, in and out of the educational system, believe responsible for the low performance of the student body in inner city schools. We found the evidence of family weakness much less clear cut. It is true that the reported absence, or any reference to a father in the house suggests that many young people were growing up with only one parent. And that surely is a source of weakness with respect to emotional development, standard of living, role models, and much more.

But one must quickly add that a significant minority of the young people who indicated by indirection that their father was not a member of the household did refer to other family members as deeply involved in their development, in school and out of school. This was surely true of the mother who was the head of household, but references were made to grandfathers and grandmothers, aunts and uncles, and especially older siblings. An elder sibling, even if a member of the opposite sex, can often be helpful to a young adolescent especially if he or she has succeeded in breaking through barriers such as having gained admission to college. Moreover, their reports as to how life is in such a new and strange environment, especially when the reports are positive can help

a younger person to set his or her sights a little higher by having proved through their own performance that passage into this new world was feasible.

In discussing these intergenerational relations of students and adults one must emphasize the large number who hungered and responded to teachers, guidance counselors, principals who were as they put it "interested in them." These young people yearned for caring adults who were able and willing to help them find their way in what is still a very hostile and discriminatory society for black people.

While it is pure speculation I am willing to assert that many of those who caused trouble in the classroom and who early became truants and lost interest in the educational venture were young people who failed to encounter any caring adults in or out of school. In many cases their families were under such great pressure that they lacked attention, support and love at home and forced back prematurely on their own resources, they could not cope satisfactorily with the demands that school and society were making of them.

The girls and young women for the most part seemed to have somewhat less difficulty than their male counterparts in adjusting to the discipline of the classroom. Repeatedly the girls reported that the boys started the fighting. In fact one or two called attention that the boys found it harder to sit still and pay attention to the teacher. Some of the boys accused their teachers of favoring the girls, an accusation that may have some justice if in fact the girls were more attuned and responsive to what goes on in the classroom.

The girls had a further advantage. Almost without exception they had a role model at home. Their mothers apparently ruled them with a tighter hand and encouraged them from their early years in school to attend to their studies so that they could not only obtain their high school diploma but would be better positioned to go either into a better job or to college. This is not the place to enter into that web of controversy about the black matriarchy and its influence on the shaping of successive generations of black youngsters beyond noting that our interviewees speak strongly to the extra nurturing and support that many black girls received from their mothers.

In answer to the questions that were related to their future, particularly those which explored their attitudes toward college and the world of work, several notes come through. Interested teachers and guidance counselors often urged the boys and girls to prepare themselves for the tests which they had to pass in order to gain admission to a preferred

high school or specialized curriculum. Regrettably many were unable to reach a passing grade and therefore had to settle for a run-of-the mill high school which offered less by way of curriculum, staff, linkages with the job market such as co-op education.

But a sizable proportion of all the young people with whom we talked had been unaware of any choices open to them and appear to have been bureaucratically transferred from elementary to junior to senior high school without so much as by your leave. In a few cases, mothers were involved and picked a school for their daughter closer to home though not necessarily the one which the student wanted to attend or where she could obtain the best education.

After our interviewing began we spliced a new question into our inquiry that asked whether the student would be willing to attend summer school to improve his or her grades and broaden their later options, even as early as the fourth grade. With no exceptions, the answer to this hypothetical question was in the affirmative. There is no way of telling what these young people would in fact have done had such an opportunity been available to them, not during one but every summer but there is reason for believing that a high proportion would have acted in conformity with their positive reply. After all, most of our respondents considered school important, did not find attendance burdensome, for the most part they liked their teachers. Why would they not avail themselves of an opportunity to get a step ahead?

While going to college was surely not absent from the plans of many of these young people, the intensity of their commitment to the idea and their ability to gain admission remained clouded. In only a rare instance could one find sufficient resonance in the reply of the young adolescent to be reasonably sure that he or she would in fact pierce the college barrier.

As to the occupational choices, the younger age group for the most part followed the pattern which we first worked out in Occupational Choice (Columbia, 1951) which suggested that at ten and eleven the choices of young people were moving out of the fantasy stage and being reported in terms of emerging interests or perceived abilities. The most popular choices among the fifteen year old female students was nurse with teacher in second position, further evidence in support of two earlier positions: the presence of role models and the better acculturation of girls to the educational process.

In the case of the boys and young men the dominant choice was professional athlete reflecting the fact that

many excelled in one or another sport; they knew that a considerable number of black persons had made it big in sports; many were hard pressed to find any other field that attracted them; and they had relatively little understanding of how difficult it was to break through and achieve professional standing in athletics.

Again, after the interviewing had begun we inquired about whether they knew anybody who, by virtue of completing high school, had secured a good job. And a related question: whom do they seek out and talk with if they want to learn about jobs.

It is disturbing to report that a considerable number (a majority) of the older interviewees, not to emphasize the younger ones, were unable to identify a high school graduate among their relatives, friends, acquaintances who had found the diploma as the way into a good job. Equally, if not more disturbing, were the replies to the question whom they would consult to learn about jobs and how one prepared for different types of jobs. A significant number of the older interviewees again said that they were unable to identify such a source. Several mentioned their counselor or center director. In only one case did the interviewee say his father, a reply which he extended by pointing out that his father had recently succeeded in getting his mother a good job.

But if their knowledge of labor market information and successful job seekers was restricted, the overwhelming majority stated that graduation from high school, preferably college was an essential precondition for getting a job--especially one that paid reasonably well and that held promise for the future. In short, the message had penetrated the ghetto that school is critically important for later adjustment.

It is unnerving to find the striking gap between this pervasive belief in the benefit of schooling and the lack of personal knowledge demonstrated by so many of the interviewees of individuals who, as a result of completing their education had been able to make a satisfactory transition into the world of work. Either the doctrine of the value of an education for job and career success was false or something else was seriously awry. Doctrine and life experience were not in consonance.

In response to the question of what they were planning to do this summer (the interviews took place in May and June of 1979) we were struck by two replies that characterized a large number of the total group. The first was that many stated that they would be going South, presumptively to visit

with relatives. If one has to speculate as to what lies back of this visitation pattern the probable answers lie first in the desire to maintain family ties, that much more important among groups who have little money to spend on recreation or other optional expenditures. Secondly, the streets of New York, especially in low-income areas, are a dysfunctional environment for normal growth and development, and the more so during the summer months when school is out and the hot weather shortens tempers. Hence, parents who are able to, "ship" their children South in the belief that the experience will be beneficial both in terms of what they gain and what they escape.

The other surprising response to the question as to what they would do this summer were the considerable number who said that they would go to camp. Some who indicated that they would go South added that they would divide the summer between visiting relatives and camp but for the most part these were alternatives. We did not probe as to how long they would spend at camp or who was paying. The presumption is that the camp experience would be of relatively short duration, a fortnight or so, and that it would be subsidized in whole or in part.

Just to round out the picture, one or two of the older students indicated that they would get a CETA job or look for private employment and several others were contemplating going to summer school.

There are two ways to see the entire group in perspective. Harsh realities dominate their lives: many families with only one parent; a level of income that at best enables most families to exist at a low standard of living; adults, when they are employed, working for the most part in unskilled occupations; housing and neighborhoods in disrepair; schools reflecting conditions in the students' families and the neighborhoods. The harshness of these realities can be readily appreciated if one contrasts a middle-class suburban community where two parent families are the norm; where family income is sufficient to allow for considerable discretionary expenditures; where one or both parents is likely to be employed in a managerial or professional position; where the housing is solid and the neighborhood secure; and the schools are the pride of the community.

This sharp contrast suggests that the young people from low-income areas in the inner city who in addition carry the heavy added burden of being black will be hard pressed indeed to find a suitable place for themselves once they stop their schooling surely if they lack a high school diploma and even

if they have acquired one. In fact we can't be sure that those who remain in school until they acquire a college diploma will be assured entrance into a preferred job. Most of them may eventually succeed but they will have to scramble.

The other perspective, a little less bleak, is to appreciate that while these young people are poorly positioned to compete for opportunities with the more favored sectors in American society--white and middle class--they are not so far off the reservation as to preclude many of them making a satisfactory adjustment especially if offered a helping hand. Our interviewees had demonstrated that they were able to surmount the harshness of their environment at least to the extent of trying to make use of the education available to them recognizing that it was the foundation for their future. These young people were surely disadvantaged in competing for the better jobs and careers that a society had to offer but they were not beyond the fringe. A few would make it even under present conditions but a larger number would succeed if our society considered it important to expand their opportunities.

7. Directions for Policy

In the last chapter we identified a short list of serious deficits that were having a negative impact on the developmental experiences of these young people, deficits involving family structure, parental employment, income, housing, neighborhood conditions, labor market information and schooling. Within the modest context of this present effort the principal objective of which has been to provide the reader with first hand information about the educational experiences of inner city youth, this concluding chapter cannot possibly address all of these deficits, much less articulate possible solutions. The most that we can venture is to focus on the central issue of possible changes in the schools which could help strengthen the position of these young people as they move into the world of adulthood and work.

A good place to start is to report on the suggestions that the interviewees made in response to our question as to what a mayor concerned with strengthening the school system should do. Almost without exception they replied as follows:

--Hire better teachers and get rid of those who are no good.

--Improve the school facilities.

--Remove the unruly students so that classroom work can proceed without interruption.

A few added suggestions about cleaning up the neighborhood, providing more scholarship assistance to facilitate college attendance, keeping the schools open during the summer vacation.

It is hard to see how the foregoing recommendations can be improved upon. They flow directly out of the experiences of these young people. All that we may be able to add is some order of specificity and some suggestions as to mechanisms to accomplish the agreed-to goals.

A good place to begin the process of specification is with the role of the principal, including the assistant principals. It should be recalled that the interviewees frequently referred to principals in both favorable and unfavorable terms. Some were seen as being interested and concerned, basically supportive, while others acted primarily as disciplinarians whose major activities were centered around suspending students who were causing trouble.

Even in a bureaucratized city-wide system with a strong teachers union which has bargained successfully for control over work rules including the placement, evaluation and removal of teaching staff, principals are still potent people. They are that much more potent if they have the ability and determination to establish their goals and pursue them aggressively.

Our interviewees do not make clear just how different the learning environments in the several schools were and the extent to which these differences reflect in the first instance the quality of the principals. But the assumption that the principal counts, in fact counts a great deal in determining the effectiveness of a school, is a reasonable starting point for reform, one surely not contradicted by our interview materials even if not explicitly substantiated.

I would argue therefore that ghetto schools that operate with acceptable or superior effectiveness should be identified; the critical elements involving the role of the principal assessed; and efforts made through in-service and other types of training to speed the diffusion of approaches that have proved themselves. It makes little sense to have each assistant principal and principal have to learn the hard way how he or she can assure the safety of the pupils and the staff, establish a rapport with the student, help the teachers improve their classroom performances, elicit support from parents and the community and do all the other things that a successful principal must learn to accomplish.

It does not follow, of course, that every principal who follows the same course of action will necessarily achieve comparable results. One principal will have more success in attracting and retaining competent staff or eliciting the cooperation of the community. But even allowing for such differences in command over resources, the performance record of broadly comparable schools should be relatively narrow, surely not as wide as at present.

If the successful principal has much to contribute to his colleagues and the neophytes, the same holds for the successful classroom teacher. Some are able to elicit the interest and command the attention of their students; others, as our interviewees reported, are frightened of the students and unable to teach, spend most of their time and energy trying to control the class which in many cases they do poorly because their lack of self-confidance comes through.

Again, if the transfer of stance, attitudes, communication skills and technical know-how from the successful teacher to colleagues and newcomers is difficult to structure and implement

it nonetheless remains a major challenge. As the students remarked almost with unanimity: we need more good teachers. Efforts to accomplish this goal must begin with teachers in training, both in the classroom and in practice teaching settings and must continue after they obtain a regular teaching assignment. Skillful supervisors who can spend time and can follow up with individual and group instruction might make a significant contribution to raising the average level of classroom performance.

The great importance that the young people ascribe to the unruly student in lowering the learning curve of the entire class suggests that this problem must be confronted and alternatives explored and evaluated. The solution that such students should be suspended as in fact many currently are, or pushed out of school, as is also a common response, is overly simplistic. While suspension may have the desired result of shocking a few students into behaving when they are permitted to return, it is too blunt and too destructive an instrument to rely upon. If teachers were not restrained from sending the unruly out of their class and principals were not hobbled when it came to suspensions, the result might be an even larger floating population of young people who while technically enrolled in schools were in fact on the streets.

But having warned against the indiscriminate use of removal from the classroom and suspension, the basic issue remains. How are the unruly to be handled? The fact that our interviewees came up with few constructive ideas is depressing.

I do not pretend expertise in this complicated arena but it might prove possible for schools, beset with these difficulties, to explore how they could involve leadership cadres among the students themselves to play a more active role in enforcing discipline. If most students are interested in learning, their leaders should be able to help if intelligently involved in keeping the classroom quiet.

A third suggestion beyond stronger staffing and a more effective response to disturbance is the recommendation of the young people for more investments in the educational process first with the focus on improving the physical plant and secondly and more importantly seeing to it that students desirous of learning have expanded opportunities to do so by attending summer school. By analogy one could extend the latter recommendation to include supervised study in the late afternoons and special programming for Saturdays and holidays. Not so long ago, when the budget of New York City was under little or no overt pressure these "extras" were common if not universal. The cynic might point out that even under these

so-called special conditions the performance of the schools left a great deal to be desired as measured by what the students learned, how many obtained a diploma, what proportion were able to gain admission to college. But the answer is not what the critics believe. To say as they do that the effects of additional resources are hard to trace in terms of positive outcomes is not the same as arguing that their elimination is a matter of no moment. One must assume that if such additional resources were sensibly deployed that they could expand opportunities at least for some of the more involved students and with time the authorities could learn how to deploy them more effectively.

One interviewee put forth a specific recommendation that has on its face much to commend it. He suggested that the city allocate a special sum for loans and scholarships to be awarded to those students who maintain a stipulated level of accomplishment so that they could continue with advanced education or training. If such a "contractual" arrangement were developed not only for the brightest, but also for those who demonstrated a high rate of improvement, the secondary effects on the engagement of the student body might be sizable. At least, it is an idea that warrants consideration.

It should be recalled that many of our students reported that they had no say when they were ready to move from elementary to intermediary to high school. The absence of participation in the choice process must be viewed as a deprivation that slows their maturation. The educational authorities should, within whatever constraints they are forced to operate, recognize that bureaucratic efficiency can be bought at too high a price and that student and parental involvement in such critical decisions is important. Perhaps the choices open to many will be relatively restricted but they should have some say.

A related matter is not so easy to deal with because it involves sizable budgetary increases. However, many of our interviewees called attention to the fact that they would have liked to enter one of the vocational high schools or vocational programs but were unable to pass the entrance requirements. At a minimum it would be a good idea if at least a few summer schools were available in the inner city to enable the interested student but one with indifferent marks to have the opportunity through special efforts to brush up on his learning skills so that he might scale the entrance barriers.

Much more costly would be a conversion of many high schools that today offer primarily a general curriculum in favor of more focused vocational instruction where the classroom work was linked, directly or indirectly, with job opportunities on the outside. This is definitely not a plea for the expansion of old fashioned arts and crafts or even of machine work on antiquated

equipment, but rather an integrated effort between school and work experience in the real world in a wide range of occupations where classroom learning is closely linked to skills needed on the job. Admittedly, such an effort will be difficult to introduce and implement effectively even if the dollars were available and in most inner city school systems dollars are and will probably remain scarce. Still, the low effectiveness of the present high school should operate as a spur to experimentation and innovation along these lines.

One does not have to be a devotee of career education, counseling, or labor market information to recognize that these innercity youngsters were conspicuously uninformed about the world of work, about access to jobs, about specific preparation. Having identified their need for assistance, the critical next step is to delineate a group of responses that hold some promise of broadening their understanding and helping them to make a transition into the world of work.

But what is to be done is far from evident. Introducing some information about jobs into the curriculum will do no harm, but also probably little good. More and better counselors with a knowledge of the local labor market would help, but how to achieve such improvement is far from clear. What these youngsters badly need is a guided process into part-time summer jobs, and later into full-time jobs which will introduce them into real work situations out of which experience they will be able to deepen their understanding of what a job is <u>really</u> like and what is required of a worker if he is to hold a job and particularly if he is to position himself to move eventually into a better one.

It is hard to conceive of any simulated experience, classroom discussion, library work, or counseling substituting for the reality of experience on a job. But here the school, operating on its own, cannot deliver. Jobs are under the control of private and public employers and only if they are able and willing to cooperate with the educational authorities and offer opportunities to these young people who currently lack such work exposure and experience can the transitional process be significantly strengthened. The newly-authorized Private Industry Councils (PICS) under Title VII of CETA if they fulfill their promise will make a difference. Unless they or some comparable employer effort is put into place and is implemented, most of these youngsters will continue to lack the opportunity they most need. For if they had any assurance that there was a job at the end of school open to them, a great many would unquestionably apply themselves more conscientiously to their school work. These youngsters, like middle-class youngsters, will respond if they have a reasonable chance of succeeding. They will not if they find that the cards are stacked against them. This is what these young people told us about their schooling.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

"With All Deliberate Speed"

Glenn Marshall

Within the predominantly Black and Hispanic inner-city communities of New York City, there exists the problem of miseducation. For at present, thousands of minority youth, who attend the public school system, are not receiving a decent education; that is, an education that will enable them to compete with their white middle-class counterparts of similar ages. It seems as though the public school administrators and teachers lack the commitment and the courage to provide these youth with an education that will enable them to become a part of the mainstream of our society. The reasons given by the school administrators and teachers vary, but one has to speculate as to why these youth are not receiving a decent education. Questions: is it because their backgrounds consist of that of the working poor and the poor; that is, does their present social status dictate failure in the academic realm? Is it because of their ethnicities? Or is it because they lack the skills? It seems ironic and absurd for the public school administrators and teachers to believe such things, but some really feel that Black and Hispanic youth cannot learn and will not learn under any circumstances. To the contrary, minority youth are trying to learn as much as they can despite the negative dispositions and beliefs of their principals and teachers as well as the spirit of hopelessness embedded in their social environments.

For the youth in the said inner-city communities want to learn and are desperately trying to learn simply because they know the true value or essence of acquiring an education in this country. They understand fully at an early age that with an education they can obtain a good life,or at least one that is better than their present one,via a good job with benefits, security, etc. To them, acquiring an education means a fuller life, but they are also aware of the fact that they are being shortchanged by the educational system itself, the classroom scene and their social environments. For these factors are preventing them or at least are frustrating them in accomplishing their educational goals.

In general, the forty male youths interviewed felt they were learning as much as possible given their circumstances, but they also felt that the schools were not providing them with the skills that will equip them for the future. example, they felt that such courses as math, science and language art were inadequate and should be upgraded, for they were very much in tune with the times; that is, they were aware of the fact that we live in a technological age

and the future belongs to those who are the most educated or best prepared. Thus, they preferred seeing a heavy emphasis on a technological curriculum.

The classroom scene is appalling and frustrating for these youth. On a daily basis, there is constant strife between them and their teachers, for they are always arguing and shouting at each other. In addition, the learning process is severely hampered by fights, paper-throwing and horseplaying. To most of us such an environment is not conducive to study. How can young people learn in such an uncontrollable and undisciplined environment? Further, the youth felt that some of their teachers really don't give a damn about them learning anything. However, they still persist in learning as much as possible despite the obstacles.

Finally, their present social environments are not exactly beds of roses. In such communities as East Harlem and Central Harlem, the problems of unemployment, underemployment, drugs, crime, poor housing, poor health and social services only compound the complex problem of miseducation.

In retrospect, these young people want school administrators and teachers to care about them. It doesn't matter to them what the administrators' and teachers' ethnic backgrounds are as long as they give a damn about their future.

APPENDIX B

"Summary Views"

Gwendolyn Barnes

These interviews focus attention on several areas within the educational system as it attempts to educate inner-city Black youth. The participants were 40 females between 10 and 15 years of age--39 were Black and 1 was Hispanic. All of them live in the inner-city predominently with working parents and many in intact families.

Through the eyes of the younger girls (10-11 year olds) even the elementary schools have their share of disruptive students. Second only to teacher apathy, classroom disruptions seem to be a major concern among pupils. Teacher apathy tends to encourage some students to be disruptive. Moreover, apathetic teachers seem to perpetuate disruptive behavior by the students. According to the pupils the teachers appear frustrated and seem to have given up on them. Put simply, they are uninvolved. As a result, the students see them as helpless and passive. This adds to the students' confusion and compounds their own feelings of frustration ahd helplessness. They feel they are being victimized twice: first by the teachers who can't cope and then by their fellow students. When "trouble-makers" inteferred with the learning process, their classmates overwhelmingly felt they should be separated from the rest of the students, either by putting them in separate schools or separate classrooms. Some students said they were not learning anything in school. They felt that the teachers' inability to deal effectively with trouble-makers and to control the class were the main causes of the problem.

There is a strong tendency on the part of many teachers to give homework and most pupils receive help with it from their parents (usually their mothers) or siblings. The majority of the interviewees felt homework is important because it reinforces classwork, yet it is seldom collected or even checked by the teachers who assign it. Reading seems to be popular among the youth who were interviewed and is encouraged by some teachers. Most often encouragement is in the form of an incentive such as a lottery ticket given to the child who reads the most books. Incidentally, with few exceptions, the students said they enjoy reading and feel that it improves their vocabularies.

Although these youth are growing up during an era when there are many unconventional job opportunities available to women, most favored traditionally female occupations such as nursing and teaching. Regardless of their expressed occupational interest, the majority of students felt that an education was necessary in order to attain their goals. There was

evidence of an enormous amount of peer pressure exerted upon them to participate in certain activities. When asked how they became interested in a particular activity, i.e., basketball, the response was usually "my friends play basketball and they got me interested." After peer pressure, school and family members ranked second and third in the ability to influence the kinds of activities the youth engaged in. Most of the pupils said their friends liked school and indicated that those who did not like it were bored.

In contrast to the younger children, the teenagers appear to have a cynical attitude towards school. Perhaps they are more realistic. They expressed the same feelings of frustration and helplessness with regard to apathetic uninvolved teachers and seemed to have resigned themselves to the situation. This was conveyed more through non-verbal communication then by what they actually said. Many teenagers recognized that at least a high school diploma is necessary in order to even get most jobs today. However, it is my sense that the majority of the interviewees felt that getting a high school diploma did not mean they had acquired a high school education; a diploma was merely their ticket out of high school. Some of them felt they could obtain the skill and knowledge which they should have received in high school by going to college or business school.

The teenagers, like the younger girls, tended to choose traditionally female occupations. The women's liberation movement does not seem to have affected them.

Many of the teenagers felt they were skilled in sports and, like the younger girls, expressed a preference at becoming more adept in this area. When choosing activities in which to participate, school, family and friends (in that order) appear to exert the greatest influence. This was not true of the 10-11 year olds because peer pressure was very powerful and ranked number one. The teenagers seemed to have more significant others in their lives and knew more people (unrelated to them) who had graduated from high school and had "good jobs."

When asked about improving the educational system, it was generally indicated that getting more qualified teachers and making the schools more attractive (pretty, clean, etc.) were priorities. They also felt that trouble-makers should be separated from the rest of the student body. Homework was considered important because it reinforced classwork. Almost all of the students felt pregnant girls should be allowed to continue their education. Interestingly, those who disapproved stated that the expectant mother might get in a fight at school and the unborn child could be injured.

For this reason they felt that pregnant girls should go to a special school for expectant mothers only.

Both groups indicated that they have a high percentage of substitute teachers. They related the high rate of absenteeism to disruptive, disrespectful students. Moreover, the teenagers appeared to resent the high rate of absenteeism most. In general, their attitude was if the teachers were more qualified, they would know how to handle the trouble-makers and they would be able to control their classes. The younger children, on the other hand, seemed to blame themselves for the high rate of teacher absenteeism. As one student put it, some of the kids were unruly, disrespectful and did not listen to their teachers, so the teachers stayed out. Maybe if the kids acted better the teachers would come to school more often.

The teenagers who felt that their friends didn't like school said they (their friends) were aware that they needed at least a high school diploma in order to get a job. They attended school only to be marked present. Once this was accomplished, their friends played hooky. They did not participate in any class activities but were passed anyway.

Are the bright 10 year olds destined to become cynical 15 year olds, or will the Board of Education fulfill its responsibility to give all children a chance to learn?

Special Reports of the National Commission for Employment Policy

* *Proceedings of a Conference on Public Service Employment*, Special Report No. 1, May 1975
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 291135)
* *Manpower Program Coordination*, Special Report No. 2, October 1975
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 291217)
* *Recent European Manpower Policy Initiatives*, Special Report No. 3, November 1975
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 291242)
* *Proceedings of a Conference on the Role of the Business Sector in Manpower Policy*, Special Report No. 4, November 1975
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 291281)
* *Proceedings of a Conference on Employment Problems of Low Income Groups*, Special Report No. 5, February 1976
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 291212)
* *Proceedings of a Conference on Labor's Views on Manpower Policy*, Special Report No. 6, February 1976
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 291213)
* *Current Issues in the Relationship Between Manpower Policy and Research*, Special Report No. 7, March 1976
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 291295)
* *The Quest for a National Manpower Policy Framework*, Special Report No. 8, April 1976
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 291275)
* *The Economic Position of Black Americans: 1976*, Special Report No. 9, July 1976
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 291282)
* *Reexamining European Manpower Policies*, Special Report No. 10, August 1976
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 291216)
* *Employment Impacts of Health Policy Developments*, Special Report No. 11, October 1976
(NTIS Accession No.: HRP 0019007)
* *Demographic Trends and Full Employment*, Special Report No. 12, December 1976
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 291214)
* *Directions for a National Manpower Policy: A Report on the Proceedings of Three Regional Conferences*, Special Report No. 13, December 1976
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 291194)
* *Directions for a National Manpower Policy: A Collection of Policy Papers Prepared for Three Regional Conferences*, Special Report No. 14, December 1976
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 291274)
* *Adjusting Hours to Increase Jobs: An Analysis of the Options*, Special Report No. 15, September 1977
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 296735)
* *Community Based Organizations in Manpower Program and Policy: A Conference Report*, Special Report No. 16, October 1977
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 296954)
* *The Need to Disaggregate the Full Employment Goal*, Special Report No. 17, January 1978
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 296728)
* *The Effects of Increases in Imports on Domestic Employment: A Clarification of Concepts*, Special Report No. 18, January 1978
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 296826)
* *The Transformation of the Urban Economic Base*, Special Report No. 19, February 1978
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 296833)
* *Manpower and Immigration Policies in the United States*, Special Report No. 20, February 1978
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 284216)
* *Dual Aspect Jobs*, Special Report No. 21, March 1978
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 296779)
* *Labor Market Intermediaries*, Special Report No. 22, March 1978
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 296656)
* *CETA: An Analysis of the Issues*, Special Report No. 23, May 1978
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 296641)
* *Discouraged Workers, Potential Workers, and National Employment Policy*, Special Report No. 24, June 1978
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 296827)
* *Labor's View on Employment Policies: A Conference Summary*, Special Report No. 25, June 1978
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 296748)
* *Women's Changing Roles at Home and on the Job*, Special Report No. 26, September 1978
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 294987)
• *European Labor Market Policies*, Special Report No. 27, September 1978
* *Work Time and Employment*, Special Report No. 28, October 1978
(NTIS Accession No.: PB 300652)
• *Increasing Job Opportunities in the Private Sector*, Special Report No. 29, November 1978
• *Trade and Employment*, Special Report No. 30, November 1978

* Reports listed above available from National Technical Information Service (NTIS) 5285 Port Royal Road Springfield, Virginia 22151 Use Accession Numbers when ordering.

• Reports listed above available from the National Commission for Employment Policy at 1522 K Street, NW, Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20005.

Special Reports of the National Commission for Employment Policy

- *The Business Sector Role in Employment Policy*, Special Report No. 31, November 1978 (NTIS Accession No.: PB 300415)
- *Monitoring the Public Service Employment Program: The Second Round*, Special Report No. 32, March 1979 (NTIS Accession No.: PB 300370)
- *The Utilization of Older Workers*, Special Report No. 33, March 1979
- *Temporary Admission of Foreign Workers: Dimensions and Policies*, Special Report No. 34, March 1979
- *Tell Me About Your School*, Special Report No. 35, September 1979

- Reports listed above available from National Technical Information Service (NTIS) 5285 Port Royal Road Springfield, Virginia 22151 Use Accession Numbers when ordering.
- Reports listed above available from the National Commission for Employment Policy at 1522 K Street, NW, Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20005.

*U.S.GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1980 O-311-416/3958

INTERIM AND ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR EMPLOYMENT POLICY

* An Interim Report to the Congress of the National Commission for Manpower Policy: *The Challenge of Rising Unemployment,* Report No. 1, February 1975. (NTIS Accession No.: PB 291136)

* An Interim Report to the Congress of the National Commission for Manpower Policy: *Public Service Employment and Other Responses to Continuing Unemployment,* Report No. 2, June 1975. (NTIS Accession No.: PB 291280)

* First Annual Report to the President and the Congress of the National Commission for Manpower Policy: *Toward a National Manpower Policy,* Report No. 3, October 1975. (NTIS Accession No.: PB 291243)

* An Interim Report to the President and the Congress of the National Commission for Manpower Policy: *Addressing Continuing High Levels of Unemployment,* Report No. 4, April 1976. (NTIS Accession No.: PB 291292)

* Second Annual Report to the President and the Congress of the National Commission for Manpower Policy: *An Employment Strategy for the United States-Next Steps,* Report No. 5, December 1976. (NTIS Accession No.: PB 291215)

* An Interim Report to the Congress of the National Commission for Manpower Policy: *Job Creation Through Public Service Employment,* Report No. 6, March 1978. (NTIS Accession No: PB 282539)

** Third Annual Report to the President and the Congress of the National Commission for Manpower Policy: *An Assessment of CETA,* Report No. 7, May 1978. (NTIS Accession No.: PB 296829)

** Fourth Annual Report to the President and the Congress of the National Commission for Manpower Policy: *An Enlarged Role for the Private Sector in Federal Employment and Training Programs,* Report No. 8, December 1978. (NTIS Accession No.: PB 296830)

* Reports are available from National Technical Information Service (NTIS), 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, Virginia 22151. Use Accession Numbers when ordering.

** Reports listed above are available from the Commission at 1522 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

BOOKS PUBLISHED FOR THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR EMPLOYMENT POLICY

which may be obtained from the publishers at the addresses indicated below:

- *From School to Work: Improving the Transition,* Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, August 1976. Stock No. 040-000-00364-9. Price $3.00
- *Employability, Employment and Income: A Reassessment of Manpower Policy,* Olympus Publishing Company, Salt Lake City, Utah 84105, September 1976.
- *Jobs for Americans,* Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632, October 1976.